

# FOGLAND BEACH OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

## Regular Meeting Minutes 27 June 2007

Members present: T. Ramotowski (Chairman, Conservation Commission), J. Cook (Recreation Commission), M. Van Hof (Open Space Commission), D. Merriman (Neighborhood Representative), D. Webster (Director of Public Works) and G. Steckman (Town Administrator).

Members absent: S. Carr (Harbor Commission).

Also present: R. Martin.

Chairman Ramotowski called the meeting to order at 5:10 PM at the Tiverton Community Center, 346 Judson Street.

### **I. Public Delegations**

There were no public delegations.

### **II. Administrative Matters**

#### **• Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Ramotowski stated that he had not yet been able to prepare the minutes from the Oversight Committee's last meeting. Those minutes will be ready in time for the Committee's next regular meeting.

Mr. Cook made a motion to approve the minutes from the inspection tour of Fogland Beach held on May 17, 2007 as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Van Hof.

VOTE: Motion passed 4-0-2 (Chairman Ramotowski and Mr. Webster abstained).

#### **• Miscellaneous Correspondence**

There was no miscellaneous correspondence.

### **III. Discussion of Results of Inspection Tour of 17 May 2007**

Mr. Steckman noted that the bathhouse was observed to be in need of new siding (vinyl?) to help with its preservation. Chairman Ramotowski asked if all of the lead-based paint that had been on the bathhouse had ever been removed. Mr. Martin stated that all of the loose/flaking paint had been removed.

Mr. Cook noted that there appeared to have been more sand on the paved road this year than ever before. Mr. Van Hof suggested that if dunes and beach grasses/vegetation could be established on the south side of the road, then the amount of blowing sand would be reduced. Chairman Ramotowski asked if it had been established whether the sand was coming from the dunes to the north of the road, or from the beach to the south. Mr. Cook stated the sand was coming from the beach. Mr. Martin stated that the DPW had been returning the sand to the part of the beach immediately next to the roadway. That is the area where cars traditionally park when visiting the beach, and some people have been complaining that the addition of the sand is making the parking area too soft to drive on. Mr. Martin suggested placing the sand no closer to the road than the line of picnic tables.

Mr. Van Hof suggested that the installation of a snow fence along the south side of the beach could lessen the problem of blowing sand. Mr. Merriman agreed with Mr. Martin that a clearly visible line was needed to indicate where the sand could be deposited. Right now, the sand is deposited all along the beach and on top of vegetation. There needs to be a line where the machinery used to spread out the sand should not cross. Mr. Merriman suggested that the line could be line of picnic tables, and all sand should be deposited to the water side of that line. Chairman Ramotowski stated that this was one of the issues the long-term management plan would address.

Mr. Merriman suggested that boulders be placed between the picnic tables and the mean high tide line to “seed” the formation of beach dunes to control the blowing sand. Chairman Ramotowski asked Mr. Webster if the DPW thought the sand problem was getting worse on the road. Mr. Webster stated that it was hard to tell. There had been some especially bad storms this past winter that contributed to the problem. Also, in the winter, when it snows, the snowplows will clear the road of both snow and sand. This past winter had minimal snowfall, so the road was not plowed as often as it would normally have been. Mr. Webster noted that there had been a lot of material to remove this year, and there is a limited area in which it can be spread – that might have contributed to the noted “softness” of the surface of the car parking area. Mr. Webster stated that if snow fencing were to be installed, it should be done not as a fence line, but rather as a series of boxes. Chairman Ramotowski stated that any such work would need CRMC approval, and was perhaps best addressed by the long-term management plan that will be developed.

Chairman Ramotowski asked if blowing sand was less of a problem near the end of the paved road, and near the bathhouse – both locations where small dune fields presently exist on the south side of the road. Mr. Webster stated that problem was worst across from the playground, and then to the west for about half the length of the beach. That is also the area where the beach itself is most narrow.

#### **IV Committee Member Reports**

- **Town Administrator**

Mr. Steckman reported that the \$15,000.00 line item for the map/survey for Fogland was approved by the voters at the Town Financial Meeting, and thus would be available for use in the coming year. Chairman Ramotowski thanked Mr. Steckman for his help and assistance in keeping that funding in the budget.

- **Director of Public Works**

Mr. Webster stated that the DPW will not place sand swept from the road within 20 feet of the edge of the roadway to address the parking issue brought up earlier.

- **Recreation Commission**

Mr. Cook reported that the rules and regulations signs have been ordered and should be received and installed in 1-2 weeks. Mr. Cook passed out a copy of the Town-Solicitor approved wording for the Fogland Beach sign. Mr. Steckman stated that he would be sending a letter to Atty. Teitz asking for a ruling on the day versus overnight camping issue. Mr. Merriman asked who was responsible for enforcing what was on the sign. Mr. Steckman replied that enforcement was a police responsibility.

Mr. Merriman stated that the whole issue needed more discussion. For example, what is meant by the “swimming area”? Is that the entire beach? Mr. Steckman stated that the “swimming area” was the area that was marked with rope attached to floats, and supervised by a lifeguard during the day. Mr. Steckman noted that someone had complained that the Town did not have enough lifeguards. The DEM sent an inspector down to Fogland in response to the call. The inspector liked the general condition of the beach, but stated that the lifeguard needed to be sitting in an elevated chair. DEM will be back to check on this periodically. Chairman Ramotowski noted that people swim and go into the water at other locations along the beach, on both sides of the road. Mr. Steckman stated that anyone doing that was doing so at his/her own risk. Mr. Merriman stated that lots of people use the north cove, and that it needs to be policed so that jet skiers do not endanger swimmers/bathers/windsurfers.

Mr. Steckman asked if the Harbor Master had ever tried to police that area. Mr. Steckman replied that the Harbor Master is not very responsive and simply says the jet skis need to remain “x’ feet from the shore. Mr. Cook suggested that watercraft speed limit signs be installed. Mr. Steckman stated that the Harbor Commission has extra stipends to help patrol the Town’s shoreline, and the Harbor Master needs to pay more attention to jet skis in this area if they are a real problem. Mr. Merriman stated that RI-DEM has a police force that can also enforce speed limits for jet skis, but they are spread thin across the entire State. What is needed are more speed buoys in a line 200 feet from the shore.

- **Conservation Commission**

There was no report.

- **Open Space Commission**

There was no report.

- **Harbor Commission**

There was no representative present. Mr. Steckman stated that a new chairman had been elected, and soon there should be someone from the Harbor Commission in attendance at the Oversight Committee meetings.

- **Neighborhood Representative:**

Mr. Merriman stated that at the May 17, 2007 inspection tour of the beach, Mr. Steckman had indicated that there should be “no selling of services” at the beach. That included teaching people how to windsurf. Mr. Steckman stated that the concern was for paid services or lessons. Any formal, paid lessons need to be run via the Recreation Commission and can only be conducted with official permission. Someone teaching another person how to windsurf for free as a favor would not be a problem. Mr. Merriman noted that recently, a certain individual had been teaching two groups of kids how to windsurf – and the lesson began at 7:30 in the morning. Mr. Steckman stated that unless the police observe money being exchanged, there is nothing that can be done. Mr. Merriman asked what the Town’s liability would be if someone got hurt during one of these lessons. Mr. Steckman stated that he would call the Interlocal Trust, the Town’s insurer, to find out if the Town had any potential liability. Mr. Cook stated that the Recreation Commission was looking into sponsoring a windsurfing lesson program at Fogland.

Mr. Merriman noted that the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday was fast approaching and that there would be large crowds at Fogland for it. There will also be bonfires on the beach – which are illegal, and firecrackers – which are a fire hazard. Mr. Steckman stated that there will be additional police patrols at Fogland for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday.

Mr. Merriman stated that he did not like the change in agenda format because it caused some things to drop off of the “radar screen”. For example, the Committee still has not received the complete list of rules and regulations for the beach it had asked for many months ago. Chairman Ramotowski noted that the agenda was changed to help the Committee focus on its prime responsibilities: communication and the long-term management plan. The regulation issue had “morphed” into the signage issue that the Committee had been discussing for several months.

## **V. Progress Towards Common Goals**

- **Detailed Map/Survey of Town-Owned Property at Fogland**

- **FY 06-07 Budget Request**

Chairman Ramotowski noted that, as previously stated by Mr. Steckman, the funding for the survey had been approved and would be available to fund the survey in the 2007-2008 fiscal year.

➤ **Drafting of RFP for Fogland Survey/Mapping**

Chairman Ramotowski stated that he would circulate a copy of the proposed statement of work for the survey that had been written back in 2004 for comments and discussion from Committee members at the next regular meeting.

➤ **Coordination with RI-DEM re: Wetlands Grant**

Chairman Ramotowski stated that he would contact Carolyn Murphy at RI-DEM to inform her of the funding approved by the Town and to make sure RI-DEM agreed with the proposed statement of work for the wetlands grant.

• **Long-Term Management Plan for Fogland Beach**

Chairman Ramotowski noted that the Committee should finally be able to make significant progress on this issue now that the necessary funding is in place.

**VI. Adjournment**

There being no further business to discuss, the June 27, 2007 meeting of the Fogland Oversight Committee adjourned at 6:10 PM.

These minutes were prepared by T. Ramotowski.